23 | Understanding of GDOT Structure

Describe your understanding of the GDOT structure relating to incident management and maintenance activities, particularly focusing on the roles of the TMC, the District Offices and the in-house maintenance forces. How should the program fit into the existing GDOT structure to ensure success?

Highlights	*The responsibility for incident management and maintenance lies primarily within the GDOT Divisions of Operations and Field Districts. These responsibilities are shared by the Office of Traffic Operations (TMC & HERO), the District Offices and State Maintenance Office. The RAM program will have a significant impact on GDOT's ability to quickly identify and respond to incidents and maintenance issues outside the Atlanta region.*

GDOT's Incident Response and Maintenance Structure

There are numerous types of incidents that GDOT responds to on a daily basis and the role of each GDOT Office primarily depends on several factors such as the type and severity of the incident, the area of the state in which the incident occurs and whether or not the incident is related to an emergency declared by the Governor. During routine day-to-day operations, most all incident management activities statewide are the responsibility of the TMC, HERO Unit and the District Offices. During emergency operations and certain special events, the State Maintenance Office takes a lead role in the incident. *Further detail on these roles is provided in the table on the following page.*

Within the metro Atlanta region, GDOT has an exceptional 24/7 program for incident response. The NaviGAtor system provides almost complete surveillance of the freeway system allowing operators to quickly detect incidents through changes in traffic patterns, monitoring of CCTV cameras and reports from motorists via 511. When incidents are detected, HEROs quickly respond to help stranded motorists and/or clear vehicles from the travel lanes. Additionally, the TIME Task Force provides an organized manner to bring together the various agencies responsible for incident management and provides a focus on best practices for quick clearance.

RAM Program Benefits

* *Improved Incident Detection and Response Times (see Incident Management Timeline graphic on last page)*

* *Better Utilization of GDOT's Limited Maintenance Resources*

* *Additional Resources for Emergency Response*

Outside the metro Atlanta region, there are numerous challenges with incident management. Incident response outside the HERO coverage areas is typically the responsibility of the GDOT Routine Maintenance Foreman. The Foreman is typically called to incidents by local law enforcement and often responds "blind" without knowing the severity of the incident or resources needed to respond. This often delays response until the Foreman can arrive at the scene, evaluate the situation and dispatch additional resources as needed.

GDOT's Current Incident Response Roles

GDOT Office	Roles		
	Incident Management	Maintenance	Emergency Response & Special Events
TMC / HERO	Monitors and reports road conditions statewide Provides incident response and motorist assistance in Metro Atlanta within the HERO service area	When major incidents occur, requests District Maintenance assistance if needed to provide detours, remove debris or address damage to the state highway system Reports routine maintenance issues to District Maintenance	Activate Emergency Operations Center (EOC) HERO coverage area may expand outside metro Atlanta
District Office	Routine Maintenance Foreman on-call 24/7 to respond to incidents	Routine Maintenance Foreman on call 24/7 to respond to maintenance issues	Activates local EOC in each District Office Routine Maintenance and Special Outfits crews respond to affected areas (locally or statewide)
State Maintenance Office	Establishes policies relative to incident response, primarily for District Offices Typically no day-to-day role in routine incident management	Establishes policies and standards for all maintenance activities Performs assessments of maintenance assets statewide Provides assessment and support to major damage to state property (bridge damage, pavement damage, etc.)	State Maintenance Engineer becomes Incident Command during declared events

Role of Roadside Maintenance and Assistance in Incident Response

The RAM program will expand GDOT's successful incident response program outside the metro Atlanta area. It will give the District Offices new tools to quickly identify and respond to both incidents and routine maintenance issues on the interstates. It will also allow better utilization of GDOT's limited maintenance resources by shifting the primary responsibility for incident response away from the Routine Maintenance Foreman, allowing the Foreman to focus on maintenance activities. As a result, the RAM program will provide numerous benefits to GDOT including:

- *Improved Incident Detection and Response Times outside Metro Atlanta* – RAM Operators will patrol the rural interstates during the peak travel times and will be available to detect and respond to incidents as they occur. Due to the roving nature of the program, response times to incidents should drastically improve due to resources dedicated to response. Furthermore, RAM Operators will be trained in proper incident management and quick

clearance techniques which should assist law enforcement and emergency responders with clearing the roadway quicker.

- *Better Utilization of GDOT's Limited Resources* – The majority of non-metro Atlanta incident response is currently provided by GDOT Routine Maintenance Forces. Since these incidents are unplanned events occurring at random times, response often interrupts other work being performed by maintenance crews and disrupts their daily activities. The dedicated RAM resources will be able to respond to and evaluate incident scenes and only request dispatch of GDOT maintenance forces where their assistance is needed. Since RAM will also be active 16 hrs/day, 7 days per week, Operators will respond to numerous incidents outside GDOT normal working hours. This will significantly reduce the number of after-hours responses by Routine Maintenance Foremen.

- *Additional Resource During Emergencies* – During emergency events such as winter weather, RAM Operators will provide a resource to GDOT Maintenance to evaluate current roadway conditions and to provide emergency response to stranded motorists. Again, this will allow GDOT Maintenance staff to stay dedicated to their activities of addressing maintenance issues.

In the incident timeline graphic on the next page, we further describe the many positive impacts on incident detection and response RAM will have during each phase of an incident.

RAM's Impact on Incident Detection and Response

RAM Dispatchers take an active role in monitoring traffic on rural roadways using Waze and INRIX Data resulting in quicker detection of incidents

Verification is enhanced by data provided by RAM Operators, resulting in appropriate response by all agencies

RAM Dispatchers enter lane blocking events into NaviGAtor, resulting in better dissemination of traveler information statewide

RAM Operators support coordination of response on scene, resulting in quicker clearance times
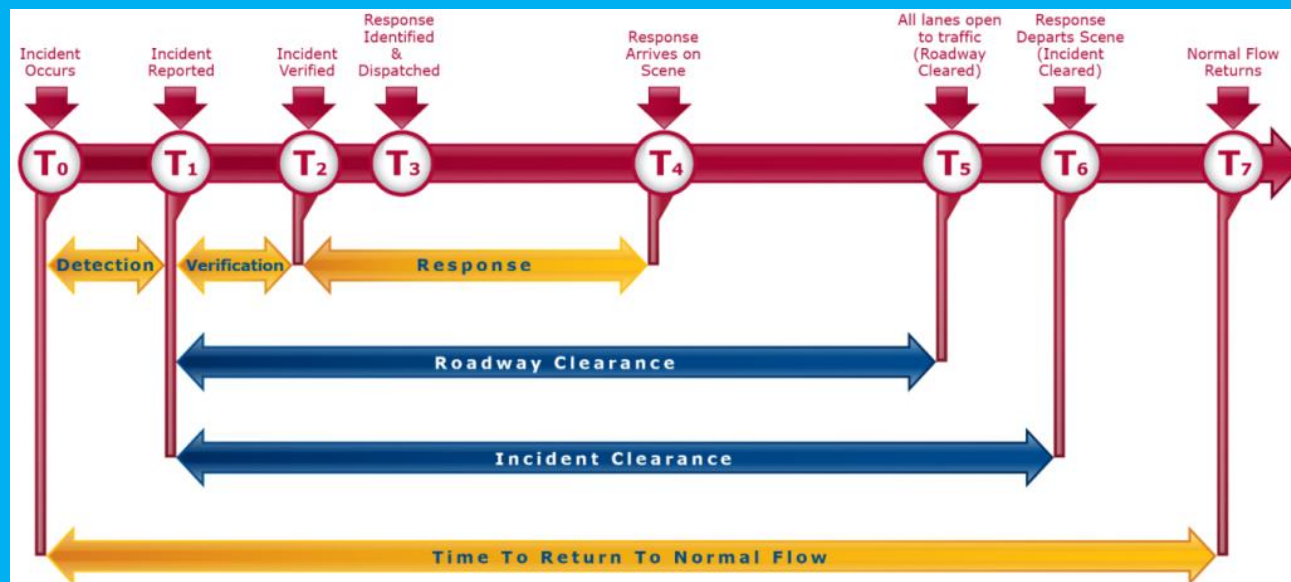
RAM Operators detect incidents during patrols – resulting in quicker incident detection & response

RAM Operators clear minor incidents without the need for law enforcement, resulting in better utilization of local and state resources

AECOM's outreach efforts to local law enforcement, fire and EMS encourages the use of quick clearance practices

RAM Operators respond during regular hours and after hours results to alleviate down time to Maintenance Crews